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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

March 31, 2021

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

Samantha Power
Administrator Nominee
United States Agency for
International Development
2733 Crystal Dr.
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Ms. Power:

I received your letter dated March 23, 2021, in response to my February 18, 2021, letter regarding a number of State Department emails that imply that while you were Ambassador to the U.N., you or your staff were working to remove a terrorist funding organizations from the Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons (SDN) list.¹ These redacted emails, some that invoke your name, ask that OFAC, “initiate a review without a formal request from [ISRA].”² My letter requested answers to several questions with regards to your office’s efforts to delist ISRA while at the U.N., and in a follow-up call, my staff requested that you provide un-redacted versions of the emails that seem to imply you were working to delist ISRA. Unfortunately, your correspondence did not answer the questions posed or provide the requested un-redacted emails.³

¹ Letter from Charles E. Grassley, United States Senator, to Samantha Power, nominated to be the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, (Feb. 18, 2021), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2021-02-18%20CEG%20to%20Power%20%28USAID%20Nom%20WV%29.pdf>; Letter from Samantha Power, nominated to be the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, to Charles E. Grassley, United States Senator, (March 23, 2021), https://www.grassley.senate.gov/download/power-to-grassley_-isra-response; see also Nomination Hearing: The Honorable Samantha Power of Massachusetts, to be Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/chair/release/menendez-opening-remarks-at-nomination-hearing-for-ambassador-samantha-power-to-serve-as-usaid-administrator->

² Email from Jeremy Weinstein, Deputy to the U.N. Ambassador to John Smith, acting Director of OFAC (Feb. 20, 2015) (on file with author); Redacted emails (Feb. 11, 2015) (on file with author) (stating, “Samantha Power asked USUN to follow-up on what sounds like a long-running issue related to our designation of [ISRA].”); Redacted emails (March 2, 2015) (on file with the author) (stating, “In the discussion with Andrea on Friday, she advised that we reach out to OGT to get an update on the remaining derogatory information on [ISRA] as well as to gage a time[] for their Department of State-supported delisting.”).

³ Letter from Samantha Power, nominated to be the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, to Charles E. Grassley, United States Senator, (March 23, 2021).

Your March 23, 2021 letter states that, “[u]nder [your] leadership, the U.S. Mission to the United Nations worked to consistently rebut ISRA’s false claims that it was wrongly designated on the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons list.”⁴ I am encouraged to hear you publicly worked to combat ISRA’s false claims. However, that does not explain why emails uncovered by my office appear to imply that your staff, seemingly working under your direction, were attempting to use back channels to have ISRA removed from the SDN list.

In a subsequent call with my staff, your office informed us that if redactions were removed from those emails, it would show that you were working to rebut ISRA’s claims instead of trying to have them removed from the SDN list. While there is nothing in your record that would lead me to doubt this is true, the American people deserve to see the un-redacted emails so that they can judge for themselves.

Transparency and a little sunshine in government is always a good thing.

It was for this reason, that as part of your confirmation process to be Director of the United States Agency for international development (USAID), I felt it necessary to seek clarity by asking you to answer questions regarding your involvement, and make these emails open and public. I once again request that you provide my office with un-redacted emails and answer all questions posed in my March 23rd letter.

Should you have any questions please reach out to Daniel Boatright or Dario Camacho of my Judiciary staff at (202) 224-5225. Thank you for your time and consideration regarding this important matter.

Sincerely,



Charles Grassley
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Judiciary

cc:

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary of State
2201 C St. N.W.
Washington D.C. 20520

Chairman Bob Menendez and
Ranking Member James E. Risch
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington D.C.

⁴ *Id.*